

IN THE SPECIFICATION

Please replace the paragraph at page 18, line 22, with the following rewritten paragraph:

Further, if the maximum temperature at the second half stage of the continuous furnace exceeds the range of from 1,200 to 1,300°C, it tends to be difficult to have the mullite have a desired crystallinity. Further, if the temperature-raising rate at the second half stage of the continuous furnace is less than 20°C/min, the furnace length at the second half stage of the continuous furnace has to be longer than necessary in order to achieve the desired temperature, and if the temperature-raising rate exceeds ~~0°C/min~~ 30°C/min, there may be unevenness in the crystallinity of the mullite in the aggregate thickness direction due to sudden heating. On the other hand, if the retention time at the maximum temperature is less than 15 minutes, there may be unevenness in the crystallinity of the mullite in the aggregate thickness direction, and if it exceeds 30 minutes, the furnace length at the second half stage of the continuous furnace has to be longer than necessary.